

In the claims:

1 1. In a communication system having a network part including at least a first
2 access network portion and a core network portion, the at least the first access network
3 portion coupled to the core network portion, and the communication system having a
4 mobile station operable to communicate by way of at least a selected access network
5 portion of the at least the first access network portion once authenticated through
6 interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network
7 portion, an improvement of apparatus for facilitating authentication of the mobile station
8 to communicate in the communication system, said apparatus comprising:

9 an identifier coupled to receive an indication of an authentication request
10 requesting authentication of the mobile station through interaction with the selected
11 authenticator, said identifier for identifying indicia associated with the selected
12 authenticator, the indicia used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the
13 selected authenticator.

1 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selected authenticator is coupled to
2 the core access network, the selected authenticator having an address associated
3 therewith, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier and used to facilitate
4 delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator comprises address
5 indicia representative of the address associated with the selected authenticator.

1 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selected authenticator authenticates
2 the mobile station through effectuation of a selected authentication method, and wherein

3 the indicia identified by said identifier and used to facilitate delivery of the authentication
4 request comprises authentication-method indicia representative of the selected
5 authentication method.

1 4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least the first access network
2 comprises the first access network and at least a second access network, wherein a first
3 authenticator, coupled to the core network portion, is associated with the first access
4 network portion and at least a second authenticator, also coupled to the core network
5 portion, is associated with the at least the second access network portion, and wherein the
6 indicia identified by said identifier identifies which of the first and at least second
7 authenticators to which the authentication request is to be delivered.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the indicia identifying to which of the
2 first and at least second authenticators that the authentication request is to be delivered
3 identified by said identifier is identified responsive to identification of through which of
4 the first and at least second access network portions that the authentication request is
5 made.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said identifier is formed of a proxy
2 located at the at least the first access network portion.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the proxy of which said identifier is
2 formed comprises an authentication request detector and a request message forwarder,

3 said authentication request detector for detecting the authentication request and said
4 request message forwarder for forwarding a request message representative of the
5 authentication request, the request message including the indicia associated with the
6 authenticator.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the communication system utilizes a
2 text-based signaling protocol scheme, and wherein the request message generated by said
3 request message forwarder comprises a text-based signaling protocol message.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the request message generated by said
2 request message forwarder comprises an indicia field, the indicia field populated with
3 values identified by said identifier to be associated with the authenticator.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the values identified by said identifier
2 and populated in the indicia field comprise values representative of an address associated
3 with the selected authenticator.

1 11. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the values identified by said identifier
2 and populated in the indicia field comprise values representative of an authentication
3 scheme pursuant to which the selected authenticator is authenticates the mobile station.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said identifier is positioned at the mobile
2 station.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile station is operable to
2 originate a communication session therefrom and wherein said identifier identifies the
3 indicia pursuant to origination by the mobile station of the communication station.

1 14. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile station is operable to initiate
2 a registration procedure and wherein said identifier identifies the indicia pursuant to the
3 registration procedure initiated by the mobile station.

1 15. In a method for communicating in a communication system having a
2 network part including at least a first access network portion and a core network portion,
3 the at least the first access network portion coupled to the core network portion, and the
4 communication system having a mobile station operable to communicate by way of at
5 least a selected access network portion of the at least the first access network portion
6 once authenticated through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the
7 selected access network portion, an improvement of a method for facilitating
8 authentication of the mobile station to communicate in the communication system, said
9 method comprising:

10 detecting generation of an authentication request requesting authentication
11 of the mobile station through interaction with the selected authenticator; and

12 identifying indicia associated with the selected authenticator, the indicia
13 used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator.

1 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the indicia associated with the selected
2 authenticator and identified during said operation of identifying comprises indicia
3 representative of address indicia associated with the selected authenticator.

1 17. The method of claim 15 wherein the selected authenticator authenticates
2 the mobile station through effectuation of a selected authentication method, and wherein
3 the indicia associated with the selected authenticator identified during said operation of
4 identifying comprises authentication-method indicia representative of the selected
5 authentication method.

1 18. The method of claim 15 wherein said operation of identifying is
2 performed at a proxy located at the at least the first access network portion.

1 19. The method of claim 15 further comprising the operation of forwarding a
2 request message representative of the authentication request, the request message
3 including the indicia associated with the authenticator.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the request message forwarded during
2 said operation of forwarding comprises a signaling protocol message containing an
3 indicia field containing values representative of the indicia identified during said
4 operation of identifying.